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HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor: PYARELAL

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SHRIRAMPUR DIARY

9-1-'47

Gandhiji addressing the prayer meeting at Daspara, said that the Muslims of the Noakhali District should tell the Bengal Government, which was their Government, that no police or military protection was required for Gandhiji and that they themselves would protect him in his tour.

10-1-'47

Gandhiji spoke about conversions during his prayer speech at Jagatpur. He said he had been hearing for some time — and more insistently since Friday — that if the Muslims asked the Hindus to accept Islam, if they wanted to save themselves or their property and if the latter responded, there was no compulsion. Gandhiji said he was not concerned for a moment with the truth or otherwise of that statement. What he wanted to say was that this was acceptance of Islam under the threat of force.

Gandhiji said that he had carefully studied, as much as he could in his busy life, Islam's history written by Muslim divines and he had not found a single passage in condonation of forcible conversion. Real conversion proceeded from the heart and a heart conversion was impossible without an intelligent grasp of one's own faith and that recommended for adoption.

Concluding Gandhiji said that he was not going to be satisfied without a heart understanding between the two communities and this was not possible unless the Hindus and the Muslims were prepared to respect each other's religions, leaving the process of conversion absolutely free and voluntary.

12-1-'47

The All-India Congress Committee by its Delhi resolution had accepted the December 6 statement of the British Government and had gone to its "farthest limit consistent with its principles" to declare its friendly attitude to the Muslim League, Gandhiji told an interviewer, a former army officer, according to the *Hindusthan Standard* special correspondent.

Gandhiji is reported to have added that he could not say what would be the League's attitude to this friendly gesture, but he could only hope that they would reciprocate.

A visitor asked which of the two alternatives for a solution of the present situation in India would be preferable — Pakistan or civil war? Gandhiji is reported to have said that he would approach the problem differently. Neither of the two suggested solutions would be good. It was wrong to think that Pakistan could be achieved through civil war.

The interviewer asked what kind of Government would be good for a free India. Gandhiji's reply to this was that it was not a question for him to answer. The question would be ripe for answer after freedom had been achieved.

14-1-'47

Some Muslim young men who met him at Bhatialpur this evening asked him what his objection was to the setting up of a separate Muslim State after the events in Bihar.

Gandhiji replied he had no objection to the setting up of a separate Muslim State. In fact, Bengal was so. But the question was: what was going to be the character of such a separate Muslim State. That had not been made clear so far and if a Muslim State implied freedom to make hostile treaties with foreign powers to the detriment of the country as a whole, then that could not be a matter for agreement.

Gandhiji thought that no one could be asked to sign an agreement granting liberty to others to launch hostilities against him.

On the young men asking whether Gandhiji did not think it advisable to concede Pakistan since it was holding back the issue of Indian independence, Gandhiji said: Only after independence has been won can there be a question of granting Pakistan. To reverse the process was to invite foreign help.

"Azadi" Gandhiji said, "and Pakistan require the exclusion of all foreign powers. Until and unless India is free, there cannot be any other question."

FREEDOM FROM ALL FOREIGN RULE

Freedom as envisaged by him, said Gandhiji, was freedom not merely from British rule but from every foreign rule.

The last question put by the Muslim young men was: Now that there was neither Pakistan nor peace, what would be Gandhiji's solution?

Gandhiji's reply was: "That is exactly what I am here for and what I am trying to find out in Noakhali." He assured the youths that the moment he found it, he would announce it to the world.

15-1-'47

Gandhiji told a meeting of Narayanpur Gram Seva Sangha that it was their primary duty to remove untouchability. Unless this virus was removed from their society, there could not be any real progress in this country. Secondly, Hindu-Muslim unity should be effected. Both the Hindus and the Muslims should be eager to achieve this end. They took water from the same tank and rice from the same paddy fields. For the time being, they should forget politics and devote their sole attention to improve villages, spread education, develop industries and other constructive works. For this purpose, workers must be prepared to die.

RETURN HOME EARLIER

Replying to a question whether the refugees should now return home, Gandhiji said that they must return home earliest. They must, however, shed fear. Spinning also should form a main part of the duty of the workers. If they span at least one hour a day, they may supply yarn to weavers who were now looking up to the Government for such supply for their handlooms. The cloth problem would consequently be easier in this way.

HAPPY ABOUT HIS HOST

At the beginning of his prayer speech at Narayanpur Gandhiji expressed his happiness at having been able to spend another night under the roof of a Muslim friend in the course of his walking tour. In spite of the fact that he had been trying to reduce the size of his entourage, his efforts in that direction had so far not been very successful. And he was glad that his host had proved equal to the occasion and had not been baffled by the number of his party.

Then Gandhiji referred to an incident that had occurred a short while ago. The elders of the house wanted him to meet the *zanana* ladies. He had made an attempt, but without success. It was true, he continued, that Hindu women attended the prayer in a large number. In this respect they were more advanced. But as such it became their duty to fraternize with their Muslim sisters and rescue them from the thraldom of the *purdah*. If they neglected this neighbourly duty, there was obviously some defect on their part.

India, Gandhiji said, was aspiring to be free. But if half the population was to remain in a paralysed condition, the type of freedom the people would attain could never be perfect. Therefore, with utmost humility, he once more appealed to the elders among the audience to examine the effect of the *purdah* system and do away with it in the shortest possible time. For, in his opinion the system, as he saw in his peregrination, was quite contrary to what the Prophet had preached.

16-1-'47

Addressing the prayer gathering this evening, Gandhiji said that he had received certain questions from some Muslims while he was in Narayanpur yesterday.

How could he advise Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab to stay out of groups if his aim was Hindu-Muslim unity and how, after this, was it possible for the Muslim League to join the Constituent Assembly? Gandhiji said there was no "if" about his aim. Hindu-Muslim unity had been his aim from his youth upward, that is for an unbroken period of 60 years. He saw no contradiction between his aim and his advice to the people of Assam, the Sikhs and, for that matter, the Frontier and those who felt like it, to stay out of groups or from the Constituent Assembly. The Cabinet Mission's Paper was of a voluntary nature and no party could be compelled to join the Constituent Assembly. They had no force to back their resolution or wishes except the force of public opinion.

CONGRESS STAND

He had, therefore, given no advice which should make it impossible for the Muslim League to join the Constituent Assembly. So far as he had read the resolution passed at the recent A. I. C. C. meeting, the Congress had completely identified itself with the Cabinet Mission's Paper.

Gandhiji hoped that the Muslim League would join the Constituent Assembly in which it was open to it to make good its position by an appeal to reason. Otherwise the Constituent Assembly, because it was a voluntary organization brought into being by the only party that had force behind it, was like a house of cards. It could only become a solid structure if it was backed by the opinion of the Indian masses. Staying out by certain provinces or groups could not and should not be a hindrance to the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, if it was otherwise good.

Gandhiji would ask, "Why should Assam be absorbed in Bengal against its will or the Frontier Province or the Sikhs into the Punjab and Sind?" The Congress or League, as the case may be, should make their programme and policy intrinsically attractive so as to appeal to the reason of the recalcitrant province or groups.

FRIEND OF BOTH COMMUNITIES

The second question put to him was: Gandhiji claimed to be a friend of both the communities, but he had been nursing back his own community for the last two months in Noakhali. What about the Muslims of Bihar, who have lost their all? Gandhiji said he would say the question ignored facts. He was not "nursing back" his own community. He had no community of his own except in the sense that he belonged to all communities. His record, Gandhiji said, spoke for itself. He freely admitted that he was trying to bring comfort to the Hindus of Noakhali, but not at the expense of the Muslims. If there was a sick member in his family and he seemed to attend to the sick member, it surely did not mean that he neglected the others.

He had had repeated and insistent advice from Muslim friends that his place was more in Bihar, where the Muslims were in point of numbers much greater sufferers than the Hindus in Noakhali. He was sorry that he had hitherto failed to make his Muslim critics see that he had sufficiently affected the Hindus of Bihar in favour of the Muslim sufferers. If he listened to his critics against his own better reason and went to Bihar, it was just likely that he might injure the Muslim cause rather than serve it.

Thus, for instance, he might not find corroboration for the many charges brought against the Bihar Hindus and the Bihar Government and, in order to be able to make such a declaration, he had accepted the better course, namely, to advise the Bihar Ministry, which had accepted his advice that they should jointly with the Bengal Government or by themselves, appoint an impartial Commission of Inquiry.

17 and 18-1-'47

A short while before prayer on the 18th instant, the Muslim friend at whose house Gandhiji had halted on his way to Badalkot approached him and said that if there was a settlement between Mr Jinnah and him, peace would be established in the country. Gandhiji's answer was that he did not maintain illusions and never ascribed to himself any superior powers. He had met Mr. Jinnah many times, as they knew, and their meetings had been marked by nothing but friendliness, yet the results were negative as they all knew.

The fact was, continued Gandhiji, that a leader was made by his followers. He reflected in a clearer manner the aspirations lying dormant among the masses. This was true not only of India but of all the world. What he would, therefore, suggest to both Hindus and Musalmans was that they should not look to the Muslim League or the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha for the solution of their daily problems of life. For that they should look towards themselves; and if they did that, then their desire for neighbourly peace would be reflected by the leaders. The political institutions might be left to deal with specifically political questions but how much did they know about the daily needs of individuals? If a neighbour was ailing, would they run to the Congress or the League to ask them what should be done? That was an unthinkable proposition.

On the previous evening Gandhiji had quoted Mr. Jinnah's advice that women should rapidly be rescued from illiteracy. But Gandhiji said that that was not enough. Was the condition of the literate men any better for their literacy? Were they not, he asked, subject to the passing fashions of the political world? Germany, which had lain so long under Hitler, proved what he meant; as all knew it was in a sorry plight today. It was not literacy or learning which made a man, but education for real life. What did it matter, questioned Gandhiji, if they knew everything but did not know how to live in brotherliness with their neighbours?

Gandhiji continued that if some people had committed grievous mistakes in their dealings with their neighbours, they should repent and ask the pardon of God. If He granted it but the world did not, even then it did not matter to a man who had learnt to depend on God; such punishment nobly borne serves to elevate a man. Gandhiji then said that in a book of sayings of the Prophet he had found that a man should never leave an error uncorrected. If they did, they would be hauled up on the Day of Judgement and find no favour in the eyes of God.

It was not enough that they acquired the art of reading, writing etc., but it was necessary that they should learn the art of living on friendly terms with neighbours. They should rescue the womenfolk, who formed half their numbers, from the thraldom of ignorance and superstition. Men should live in cooperation and work for the common good. For this, they should not look up to political parties for direction, but to their own souls or God.

Personally, Gandhiji said, he had addressed himself wholly to that task. He would not leave this part of the country alive if the work remained unaccomplished. If he succeeded in overcoming the distrust of his Muslim brethren, and in establishing the fact that, after all, it was the daily things of life such as he had mentioned which mattered most, then its effect would be felt not merely in this part of the country but over the whole of India; and as such might even deeply affect the future peace of the world.

GANDHIJI'S PRESS STATEMENT

A correspondent writes to me to say that the strained relations between the Hindus and the Muslims bid fair, if timely warning is not taken, to replace Nagari and Urdu scripts with Roman. There are undoubtedly protagonists of the Roman as the universal script. It seems to me that it would be a great human tragedy if such a result comes about. Time saving devices are good upto a certain point. But they take the form of a mania when they destroy human relations and desirable restraints. I must not tarry to examine what they are. Suffice it to say that lovers of the Nagari script which is scientifically almost perfect, and the Urdu script, which is so graceful, will not be carried away by the lazy craze for the Roman script. Would that both the communities will be sane enough to realize that the mutual dislike is not allowed to replace the two Indian scripts. But if that happy consummation does not take place, let those few or many who have regard for sacred human understanding assiduously learn both the scripts and thus enrich the Indian national language Hindustani as the easy fusion of Hindi and Urdu. Let the Provincial Governments beware of the lure of the Roman script. Let it not be said of India that it is so degraded as to become the blotting sheet of civilization.

Kheturi (Noakhali), 24-1-'47

HARIJAN

February 2 1947

COMMUNAL MURDERS

1

The situation in Bombay regarding communal murders does not appear to be much improving. Occasionally there are also mob fights and Government is often obliged to resort to firing. This is extremely disturbing. In the light of these incidents grand and expensive schemes for further development and enlargement of the city do not enthuse one. If the social life of the people is getting more and more disintegrated and the relations between the various communities are getting more and more strained, of what worth are outwardly more beautiful and up-to-date cities and all the creature comforts and conveniences, which modern science might make available?

The Peace Committees, and the joint appeals of the Congress, the League and the Scheduled Class leaders do not seem to exert much (if at all, any) influence upon the perpetrators of the murders and their patrons. The police does not seem to lay its finger on real abettors, even if it does arrest actual assailants.

Certain inferences seem irresistible:

(i) The Peace Committees, and those who sign the appeals, consist of men who either do not work earnestly or have not much influence over the people who create disturbances or include men who are themselves either abettors or at least look upon the murders and disturbances with a sense of communalist satisfaction and stand upon the Committees or sign the appeals insincerely.

(ii) The Police is either corrupt, or communally split, or for some strong reasons does not dare to touch the real principals working behind the crimes.

(iii) Economic rivalry, unemployment, want of residential accomodation, difficulties in getting adequate food and clothing, high prices, black-marketing, the extremely big hiatus between the very rich and the very poor, the loss of moral sense which generally follows great wars, and communal propaganda combine together to drive the half-awakened working classes on communal lines, so that the workers of one community look upon those of another as the cause of their economic difficulties and having become desperate readily resort to violence. Political leaders, for their own ends, exploit their ignorance and fan mob fury.

The Government is making frantic efforts to meet the situation by tightening up punitive legislations, arming itself and the Police Commissioner with wide powers for removing "bad characters" (i. e. *de facto* perpetrators of crimes) and by promptly bringing out the armed police or the military.

I have no faith in punitive legislations. Not the severest punishment has ever put an end to crimes. An extremely small fraction of crimes, actually committed, is detected and a still smaller fraction is punished. Hardened criminals can, therefore, always take the risk incidental to their habitual vocation. Externment of "bad characters" does not remove the evil any more than throwing the sweepings of my house before the door-step of my neighbour's does. Putting them into jails for a period is like throwing the sweepings into the dust-bin, and, when it is full, emptying it again on the streets, to get once again into the houses with the wind in a more contaminated form.

But governments, — capitalist or socialist, responsible or irresponsible — with their unshakable faith in force as the ultimate preserver of law and order, are not expected to devise anything better than punitive laws and militarism for combating evils. And in this respect governments simply reflect the faith of the majority of the people whom they govern. I do not, therefore, blame governments for their punitive measures. But while I may not blame them, I need not hesitate to say that these measures are not going to stop the evil from which society is suffering.

2

What shall we do, then, is a pertinent question. I shall attempt to answer it.

To my mind it is essential in the first place to realize that establishing peace is a constructive activity and not merely a preventive, resistive or retaliatory one. Peace is not ending hostilities by forcing the opponent to surrender and accept whatever terms might be imposed upon him. It is the creation of friendly feelings where bitterness and enmity reigned before. A lesser goal than this will not bring success where communities residing in one country have become mutually estranged.

Being a constructive activity, political party organizations and their prominent leaders are not well fitted for building peace. By their very nature these organizations and their leaders — whether in the official group or in opposition within their own parties — have their eye firmly set on the capture of the administrative machinery. In none of their activities can they forget their god, the voter. A constructive activity or a grand public scheme is more important to them for the reward it will bring to them in the shape of success at the next election than for the benefit it might confer upon the people. Their rivalries in the political field being very much responsible for arousing communal feelings, they will not allow them to work whole-heartedly in building peace. Even when they meet in common committees for a common purpose, they cannot resist the temptation of having a fling now and then against an opposite party, with the result that when they part, they often find themselves more hostile towards one another than before.

The work of creating peace must, therefore, be undertaken by an independent non-political organization. Individual leaders, temperamentally suited for it, in spite of their particular political associations, might stand on its committees, but the organization itself should be conducted by persons who remain scrupulously afoof from politics and consider the building of peace amongst various communities their principal life-work. Its organizer must be a person, who even though he had the capacity of entering politics or taking interest in several activities simultaneously, would single-mindedly and selflessly make the building up of friendly feelings and peaceful relations amongst the various communities the sole task of his life. Of course, in executing this mission, he would have to attend to and organize a good many activities. For instance, he would have to find ways and means for the creation of social virtues and civic sense amongst the ordinary hard-working folk; he would have to study the domestic and economic problems of people classed "bad characters" and of orphans and neglected children likely to join that camp, to find those maladjustments in their life, which engender anti-social tendencies; he must be an extremely social person — a man of the people; he would not talk politics to the people among whom he works; he would keep aloof from election campaigns, from debating the *pros* and *cons* of joint and separate electorates, of Pakistan and Akhand Hindustan etc; nor would he discuss the merits and demerits of the various religions and political 'isms' and one who, like, say, Shri Ravishanker Vyas of Gujarat or Appa Saheb Patwardhan of Ratnagiri (the present President of the Gandhi Seva Sangh), did not know fear in moving among all types of people; he would only stress the necessity of cultivating good morals, social virtues, duties of citizenship and a spirit of friendliness and cooperation among all the communities, and devise social and economic activities which would bring out and foster these qualities in the people.

Of course, he would need the active sympathy and cooperation of the common citizens. But a large part of the citizens, who work with him, would be persons who, though they might at the time of elections vote for a party standing high in their esteem for the time being, are otherwise not too strongly party-mad in their every day life. They are people who either do not presume to understand very clearly, or even though they do, do not feel over-interested in the issues which divide the various parties. What they understand and value above everything else is the supreme importance of peace and security in the city and friendly relations among all, irrespective of their caste, creed or political associations. It is a mistake to consider such people as unintelligent or uninformed. Rather, they are often very wise and shrewd and do not fall too readily into the traps of dogmas. They understand very well what they themselves want, — namely, freedom to move about in the city and to pursue their daily vocations without fear or hindrance, — and are willing to contribute actively for that objective.

I believe that it would be possible to find a good number of people of this type. An attempt should be made to secure their help and cooperation. The volunteers for organizing the work of the Peace Committees should come from this class rather than from various Volunteer organizations affiliated to particular political parties. Students would do well to spend a good part of their youthful vigour in such work, instead of becoming at too early an age fanatic adherents of particular religious or political 'isms' or parties, and taking practical lessons, in all the evil practices of the elderly political leaders, for strengthening their respective party machines.

3

So much about unofficial endeavour. I shall now discuss how Government may help communal peace in a constructive manner.

Much though I may wish, I do not expect it to discard its powers of punishment and resorting to 'stern measures'. But since they feel that this has to be done, it should be done at least efficiently. The real financers, brains and suppliers of weapons working behind the murderous activities must be caught hold of, however great their position and influence may be; trials must be speedily ended; and in making arrests, scores of men must not be driven to the police station and detained there for hours to find out if there was a culprit or two among them.

But more important than punitive measures is the removal of the grievances and hardships of the class of people from which criminals grow. In my opinion, their grievances arise from two distinct causes: one, economic and the other, psychological. The economic grievances are, as mentioned earlier, the unsatisfactory position regarding food, clothing, fuel, residential requirements etc. and employments not paying enough to meet their essential wants. That there is a general scarcity of these things is not a cogent argument with them. For, they see with their own eyes that those who have the means and are unscrupulous enough to adopt any efficacious method are able to procure more than their reasonable needs, — even to live lavishly. They cannot but carry the feeling that all the hue and cry raised about scarcity is a trick to starve the poor. If the poor man can see that it is not only he, but the rich man also, inspite of having a thousand rupees cash always on hand, who suffers want of enough food, clothes, fuel, oil, match-boxes, quarters etc., he would not carry a feeling of anger. Being unable to show his anger against the rich, he lets it out against his nearest rival, much as a daughter-in-law who is unable to punish her mother-in-law thrashes her child or smashes her pots to give vent to her resentment. Heroic efforts must, therefore, be made to ensure that, in respect of the essential needs, the rich and the poor feel the pinch of scarcity equally.

The second cause is psychological. The persons available for murderous projects belong to a class which generally does not hunger so much for money as for adventure and for sensuous pleasures when available. They are not thrifty and do not want money to lay by. Ordinary vocations are not attractive enough for them. But they will readily take to jobs which have an element of risk and adventure. If these people are to be reclaimed from their anti-social pursuits, useful but risky employments must be found for them. Of course, the employment must be accompanied with adequate rewards, which need not necessarily be pecuniary. This is a work, which Government alone can devise and execute.

Another important thing, which Government and the Municipal Corporation must realize, is that the aspiration to make Bombay a second London or a second New York is a false idea. What is needed is not a carefully prepared plan for Greater Bombay, but a carefully prepared scheme for breaking up Bombay into 15 or 20 towns, situated at a distance of 50 to 100 miles from one another,—a scheme for small towns, scattered all over the province, instead of a few highly congested cities. Cities attract not only millionaires, speculators and seekers of well-paid employments but also a majority of habitual offenders that are discharged periodically from the Central Prisons of Nasik Road, Yeravda, Sabarmati etc. Perhaps because all of them have one thing in common, namely, that they want more than they deserve, and that, too, very quickly. *Goondas* and absconders are safer in cities than in villages or small towns. I doubt whether the attempt to banish them from the cities succeeds much. I believe that most of them return to the city, or go to another city, within a few days, perhaps under a different name and religion. I would not be surprised if it were discovered some day that the Muslim assassin of a Hindu and the Hindu assassin of a Muslim were identical persons. Indeed it might even turn out that some of the Hindu, Muslim and Scheduled Caste criminals belonged to a common gang working under, and paid by a common captain.

If communal politics are amicably settled, perhaps communal murders might cease; but that will not be the end of murders and incendiarism. They existed and tended to increase before communal troubles started and will do so again. New York and London do not appear to be free from them. Communal differences are only a convenient lever for the time being, the real causes being economic, psychological and the congestion of the city.

May I hope that the public as well as those who govern will seriously consider the constructive part of this problem?

Sabarmati, 16-1-'47 K. G. MASHRUWALA

Out of Stock

Dr. A. K. Bhagwat of Uruli-Kanchan reports that his publications have already gone out of stock and no more orders can be executed.

Sabarmati, 22-1-'47 K. G. M.

PLANNING WITH VILLAGE BIAS

II

FOOD, FODDER AND AGRICULTURE

1. AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT

The ways and means to improve India's agriculture are mainly: (1) To prevent fragmentation and to fix economic holdings; (2) Country-wide tapping and harnessing of our water resources; (3) Improvement of soil and its productivity through natural as well as scientific treatment of manures, seeds, crop-diseases, prevention of soil erosion etc.; (4) Co-operative effort; (5) State aid and protection; (6) Reclamation of waste-lands inland and along the sea-coasts and the creeks.

Each one of these subjects has been discussed threadbare time and again by experienced men who have devoted their lifetime to their study, without having an opportunity uptill now to put their suggestions and solutions to practical working. Though, therefore, they are vital and important, I may not discuss them here beyond mere enumeration.

2. CATTLE, FODDAR, MILK

The breeding of draught animals, which are the mainstay of Indian agriculture, must be encouraged on large-scale scientific lines. Laboratory experiments on Government farms or military establishments would not meet the urgent need. The present draught cattle with the Indian farmer are utterly uneconomic and a veritable burden. All promiscuous breeding must be prohibited and castration of all male calves, save those certified by the Veterinary Department as fit for breeding purposes, must be made compulsory by law, even like vaccination of children.

It will be news to many that unbelievably vast areas of private-owned lands, even in an agriculturally advanced province like Bombay, are lying waste. In only two out of the ten *talukas* (Pardi and Bulsar) of the Surat district which is noted for its fruit orchards and gardening, 80,000 and 64,000 acres of private-owned lands grow nothing but grass, *babul* or brambles. It may be noted here that in these *talukas* annual rainfall is about 75 inches. Besides, excellent rivers flow at distances of every 5 or 7 miles and empty out fresh water by millions of gallons in the Arabian Sea throughout the year.

In a neighbouring village the other day a visiting government officer found that of the entire holdings covering some 1200 acres, no more than 350 acres were under cultivation as against 851 acres consisted of grass lands only! These grass lands are not what is called the "village common", i. e., pastures for village cattle to graze. Far from it, they are owned mostly by absentee landlords — the *sowcars* who cut, cart and carry away every blade of grass duly bundled and baled for the Bombay stables! In spite of all the "Grow More Food" Campaign by Government and other public agencies, these landlords successfully contrive to make hay literally while the countryside starves and lives on depleting

rations of foodgrains imported from America and elsewhere. They will not allow their tenants to grow on these lands foodgrains — which none-the-less yield equal quantities if not more of fodder — lest they may have to share the produce with them and keep vigil during harvest to prevent pilfering! Millions of acres of such lands are lying waste in our country in the hands of such owners who pursue the proverbial 'dog in the manger' policy. These owners should be made to lease out their lands to landless peasantry on easy terms for growing foodgrains, vegetables, etc., and irrigation facilities should be provided by Government. High prices of grass and tobacco have induced many landlords in the districts of Gujarat to by-pass the Government and convert considerable food-growing acreage into grass or tobacco growing areas in the teeth of Government propaganda for food growing. This must be stopped effectively without delay.

While such vast grass areas abound in our province, milk is produced in the heart of cities like Bombay and sold at a rupee a seer and above. All stables in cities and suburban areas round Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona, Sholapur, Hubli etc., should be abolished and prohibited by law and cattle-keeping and rearing should be allowed only in rural areas in natural surroundings where grazing, stabling, credit and transport facilities should be provided by Government by pooling together, on popular lines, the resources of charitable trusts and institutions, intended for these purposes, such as *panjrapoles*, *goshalas* etc.

3. Reclamation of Coastal Lands

Thousands of acres of salty lands are lying along creeks in the costal districts of Surat, Thana and Konkan. These have been washed off and gone waste but could be reclaimed under Government encouragement and help through a system of bunding and would yield thousands of tons of coarse "salt-paddy" as it is called. I think some years ago a survey was made to such an end in the Thana district by a special officer appointed by Government.

I also remember an instance in which years ago a whole adult population of a salt-making village in the Thana district, who were engaged in a labour dispute with the employers, embarked upon a joint venture of rebuilding an old bund as a constructive substitute for their enforced unemployment, and succeeded in reclaiming vast lands which were washed off by the creek and totally lost to the village for more than a generation. This first-rate constructive effort proved a guarantee against possible acts of violence, which the organizers feared, on the part of some of the idle strikers and a veritable boon to the whole village in as much as it brought an additional annual yield of several hundred *khandis* of 'salt-paddy' for the village to the permanent benefit of every family.

The problem, however, of reclaiming such areas may be said to be beyond the capacity of any private agency, but under State initiative much could be achieved in the direction.

4. Vegetable Growing

Our people's diet is hopelessly low and ill-balanced being highly deficient in fats, proteins and other nutritives. The grass lands above-mentioned can grow excellent fresh vegetables, in abundance, on which poorer people can greatly rely during certain seasons, as they do, for instance, on *mowra* flowers in the Panch Mahals or on jackfruit in parts of the Konkan. Today fresh vegetable is an item of luxury to be found in the menu of the well-to-do classes only. The growers market every ounce of their produce to the cities and towns where it is sold at 4 to 12 annas a lb. And yet the grower hardly gets 1 or 2 annas out of it, the lions's share going to the railways and the city broker or the middlemen. Years ago this writer had reproduced in these columns figures of sale proceeds against expenditure from the account books of a renowned garden owner of the province who faced virtual ruin having had to distribute as much as 87½% of his income between the railway and the middlemen. Only a couple of years ago certain military camps near Wardha compelled village farmers to grow huge quantities of fresh vegetables for them but decamped suddenly to a distant front plunging that whole countryside in total economic ruin. I saw with my own eyes cart-loads of bewitching cauli-flowers selling at one pice a lb. for a whole season and bullocks being fed with maunds upon maunds of beautiful tomatoes which could easily compare with those seen in the coloured advertisements in the American journals. Only the other day I met a big grower of excellent vegetables in my own neighbourhood who supplied some few thousand lbs. of fresh vegetables daily to the military establishments and then to Government ration-shops in Bombay, but who now finds himself — and along with him 11 small villagers whom he encouraged to grow — utterly stranded as a result of a sudden stoppage of Government purchase owing to a change of policy.

All this maladjustment must stop and wise planning follow which would protect the growers against such calamities. Village growers should be discouraged to grow for big and distant cities, but helped to cater local needs within the district and a fair return ensured to them by fixing minimum prices, as in the case of milk, for their undertaking to grow for well-defined restricted areas.

5. Sewage Waters

In vegetable growing for big cities like Bombay, Ahmedabad etc., and for raising green fodder for city stables utilization of night soil and sewage water could be thought of with advantage. If drinking water could be brought to cities from distant catchment areas, the city sewers may be as well diverted for manuring and irrigating vast areas in distant suburbs. It may be relevant to say here that the Ahmedabad Municipality has been utilizing part of its sewage system in this manner

for years and has been making a decent income. In Delhi, Allahabad, Karachi and elsewhere too, I think, this is done more or less.

Vapi SWAMI ANAND

(*To be continued*)

RESOLUTION

[The following resolution, defining the objectives of the future constitution of India, was moved by Pandit Nehru in the Constituent Assembly of India on Friday, the 13th of December, 1946, and was unanimously passed by the Assembly on the 22nd of January 1947 after a full discussion.]

1. This Constituent Assembly declares its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India as an Independent Sovereign Republic and to draw up for her future governance a Constitution;

2. wherein the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the Independent Sovereign India shall be a Union of them all; and

3. wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the law of the Constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers and functions as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom; and

4. wherein all power and authority of the Sovereign Independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government, are derived from the people; and

5. wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action subject to law and public morality; and

6. wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes; and

7. whereby shall be maintained the intergrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilized nations; and

8. this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind.

GANDHIJI'S APPROACH

Speaking at a students' meeting at the Ashutosh Hall on the 13th January, Dr. Amiya Chakraverty expressed his belief that there was in Gandhiji's historic march an impelling drive of spiritual faith in the neighbourly goodness of a common people which communal passion could obscure but never destroy. Gandhiji had gone to the interior of Bengal to restore this intrinsic trust without which no society could function. He sought to prove to the victims and the so-called victors of Noakhali that the recent man-made calamity did not even help the majority community. On the contrary, the latter stood to lose materially just as much as they had lost in honour and reputation. Rural life depended on cooperative welfare and any rude shock to mutual trust and any dislocation of the economic and political life was bound to shatter, as it had already shattered, the total agrarian security. The majority population misled by communal leaders had forgotten this fact but they were now realizing it mainly under the truthful light torched by Gandhiji's words and unsparing analysis.

Another factor that Gandhiji's programme included was rehabilitation with or without Government help. That the striken and outraged conscience of the nation must take up the challenge of Noakhali was what Gandhiji wanted.

(*From the A. B. Patrika, 15-1-'47*)

ECONOMICS OF KHADDAR

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By

Richard B. Gregg

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